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**JNCC Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies Programme**[www.jncc.gov.uk/page-4079](http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-4079)

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**Half-yearly Newsletter No. 1****August 2008**

Hi Everyone,

Welcome to our twice-yearly newsletter for the JNCC Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies Programme, to keep you updated on the latest happenings. We look forward to your feedback, suggestions, recommendations and articles for future issues.

Best wishes for your summer/winter holidays!

**Tara Pelembe**

JNCC Overseas Territories Officer

[tara.pelembe@jncc.gov.uk](mailto:tara.pelembe@jncc.gov.uk)

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**JNCC OT/CD programme**

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee has confirmed nature conservation in the UKOTs and CDs as one of its strategic objectives. The overall aim of the programme is “to provide to UK Government departments, the governments of the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies and others, timely and sound advice to support the achievement of the 2010 biodiversity target, the progressing of Environment Charters and the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements.” The programme is divided into five projects:

- Advice and communications.
- Funding and research for biodiversity.
- Multilateral Environmental Agreements.
- Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP).
- Sustainable development.

What follows is main news from each of these projects:

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**Project 1: Advice and communications****Crown Dependencies Workshop**

In March, the Isle of Man hosted a workshop co-ordinated by JNCC for leads from the Government environment departments of the Crown Dependencies, Sovereign base areas Cyprus and Gibraltar, set up to explore the potential for collaboration. Participants came from Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney, Isle of Man, and Sovereign base areas Cyprus. The event started with presentations from all of these islands giving background to what they do and outlining priority areas.

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Telephone: + 44 (0)1733 562626 Fax: + 44 (0)1733 866919

### **Réunion Conference:**

In July JNCC, Defra and nine UKOTs participated in a conference entitled “The European Union (EU) and its Overseas Entities: strategies to counter Climate change and Biodiversity loss”. This was hosted on Réunion Island,, under the auspices of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union. JNCC was an official supporter of the event and a member of the Steering Committee.

There were some 700 participants included representatives from Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) , Outermost Regions (ORs), relevant European Member States, the European Commission, the European Parliament, Scientific institutions and Non-Governmental Organisations.

The nine UK Overseas Territories represented made valuable contributions to the conference. These included the Minister of Agriculture, Land, Housing and the Environment Mr Ruben Meade (Montserrat) who chaired a plenary session entitled “How can European policies help address the environmental challenges in the ORs and OCTs;” Ms Lynda Varlack (British Virgin Islands Government) who gave a presentation at a workshop entitled ‘What partnership between ORs, OCTs, the EU member states and the European Commission to promote the protection of habitats and species’; and Mr Kenneth EBanks (Cayman Islands government) participated in a podium discussion on ‘Alliances between the EU, ORs, OCTs, ACP countries and Small Island Developing States to counter climate change and biodiversity loss’

This event was the first of its kind to bring together such a wide range of participants and successfully provide a platform for discussion and an opportunity for collaboration and networking. The outcomes of this positive initiative need to be built upon working with the EU, its Member States and its Overseas Entities. JNCC has prepared a information paper on the event that will shortly be available at [www.jncc.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=4415](http://www.jncc.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=4415)

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### **Telemeeting updates.**

*Contact: Tara.pelembe@jncc.gov.uk*

A series of telemeetings have been initiated linking environment departments in the OTs and JNCC to discuss areas of common interest. These are currently happening at a 6-monthly interval with the South Atlantic Islands and at a 3 monthly interval with the Caribbean islands.

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### **Overseas Territories Visitors Lunch Time talks at JNCC**

JNCC has had a very interesting series of talks and visits from Overseas Territories Visitors including:

Lynda Varlack	British Virgin Islands Government
Trevor Glass	Tristan da Cunha Government
Helen Otley	Falklands Government
John Bothwell	Cayman Islands Government (OTEP fellow)
Rhon Connor	Anguilla Government (OTEP fellow)
Sarah McIntosh	CANARI
Andrew Darlow	St. Helena (South Atlantic Invasive Species Project)
Phil Lambdon	RSPB (South Atlantic Invasive Species Project)
Susanna Musick	Ascension Island Government

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Here is an outline of one of the talks given by Andrew and Phil

### **Baseline Survey of St. Helena's Flora**

**Andrew Darlow [adarlow.sais@helanta.sh)**

The flora of St Helena represents this unique island's largest endemic taxon. With some 45 endemic plant species contained within its 120 square kilometres, St Helena represents one of the most naturally biodiverse environments of the UK. Forty five species, yes, but with a recent extinction (2004), two species extinct in the wild, many more hanging on with a single specimen or small population, the time is not yet ripe for celebration. The reasons for the fragile state of St Helena's botanical heritage are well documented, the survival of what remains is less certain. Current impacts of invasive alien plant species and the impending need to dedicate more of the island's land mass to renewable energy initiatives have as much potential to wreak havoc as the onslaught of feral goats and distillers' fires did two centuries ago.

The EU funded South Atlantic Invasive Species project was proposed to examine ways in which regional capacity to deal with invasive aliens could be increased. The region which spans the southern hemisphere from sub-Antarctic to equator has many and multifarious issues. The project is under the management of RSPB and close working collaborations have been established with Royal Botanic Gardens Kew and the JNCC. Locally the project team (of three) have been working with stakeholders to develop and begin implementation of priority action plans.

One need identified on St Helena was for comprehensive and comprehensible baseline data. Being able to identify what, where and how alien plants are impacting on the island will enable practical measures to be targeted and measured. The data will also allow strategic planning and future funding bids to be better informed. The stakeholders of Ascension Island, nominally a dependent of St Helena, identified general botanical support for conservation work in Green Mountain National Park as a priority. To meet these needs the project employed a professional botanist, Dr Phil Lambdon. In collaboration with the local project officer and volunteers, Phil has just completed a comprehensive botanical survey of the distribution and abundance of the plants on St Helena. The survey took five months of near constant effort to complete. Early analysis of the results have indicated that although St Helena's endemic plants represent about 10% of the species listed on the island, they occupy less than one percent of the area, the remainder is comprised of introduced and mainly invasive species. Further analysis and presentation of data will be carried out later this year and subject to funding, a Flora for St Helena is planned for 2009.

The highlight of the survey to date has been the discovery of a plant last seen by William Burchell over 200 years ago, not recorded since and presumed extinct. The finding of *Bulbostylis neglecta* or neglected tuft sedge may just have been in time to save it from certain extinction; invasive *Pennisetum setaceum* (African fountain grass) which has made massive inroads on the island over the past three decades is rapidly encroaching on the sedge's habitat.

The team will now attempt a similar operation on Ascension Island and additionally hope to contribute on a practical level with the ongoing propagation and restoration work for endemic plants being carried out by the island's Conservation department.

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Neglected tuft sedge –  
*Bulbostylis neglecta*



Typical terrain on St Helena encountered by the botanical team

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## Project 2: Funding and research

### New Funding post

Contact person: [Tara.pelembe@jncc.gov.uk](mailto:Tara.pelembe@jncc.gov.uk)

The unavailability of funding is one of the key constraints for nature conservation projects in the UKOTs. DFID has provided JNCC with funding for a post, the role of which will include clarifying and document funding sources for nature conservation for which OTs are eligible, and supporting funding applications to these funds. Details of the post will shortly be available on [www.jncc.gov.uk/page-3252](http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-3252).

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### Overseas Territories Research Programme:

Contact: [Elizabeth.Moore@jncc.gov.uk](mailto:Elizabeth.Moore@jncc.gov.uk)

JNCC is developing an OT and CD research programme which aims to address the nature conservation research priorities identified in the consultation exercise last year. We have linked with the University of Reading who are keen to develop an OT research programme at the University. The programme has 4 main components:

- (i) Training and research skill development for individuals and organisations in the OTs.
- (ii) Access to UK-based research and advisory expertise.
- (iii) Activities to enhance knowledge transfer between OTs.
- (iv) Collaboration with tertiary education facilities in the OTs and in OT regions.

To kick start this initiative, the University of Reading, in collaboration with the University of Exeter, has submitted a proposal to the NERC Knowledge Transfer fund, to start to implement some aspects of the programme. This proposal has been accompanied by letters of support from six OTs.

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## Project 3: Multilateral Environmental Agreements

### CITES in the OTs

Contact: *Vin Fleming* ([vin.fleming@jncc.gov.uk](mailto:vin.fleming@jncc.gov.uk)) or *Nichola Burnett* ([nichola.burnett@jncc.gov.uk](mailto:nichola.burnett@jncc.gov.uk)).

One of JNCC's roles is to act as the UK Scientific Authority (Fauna) for CITES; the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew provides the complementary role for plants. Part of our CITES role includes providing advice and support to OTs/CDs if requested. Over the past year, along with representatives from the UK Management Authority and HM Revenue & Customs, we contributed to the provision of CITES training to the Cayman Islands (in February 2008) which followed on from a preliminary visit in January 2007. We were also able to provide some support to Montserrat in the submission of a successful bid to OTEP for a similar CITES training event (to take place later in 2008-09). We also had the opportunity to meet with a representative of the Falkland Islands Government for whom we act as CITES Scientific Authority. Should any OTs or CDs have any queries in relation to the scientific elements of the Convention (relating to animals), we would be happy to provide you with any advice or assistance that we can.

#### *CITES Training in the Overseas Territories*

*Pictured (from left): Samuel Rose, of the Cayman Islands' Ministry of the Environment; Nichola Burnett (JNCC); Gina Ebanks-Petrie, Director, Department of Environment, John Hounslow, CITES Management Authority, Animal Health; and Charles MacKay, HM Revenue & Customs.*



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### Ramsar Convention

Defra is preparing briefing for Ramsar COP10 which takes place in South Korea from the 28th of October to the 4th of November. The UK will be sending a delegation of Defra officials with technical support provided by JNCC

UK has a Ramsar COP10 position meeting planned for the **3rd of September** so Defra are looking to receive initial comments on the Draft Resolution by **26th of August**. Following the September meeting, there is an EU coordinating meeting taking place in Brussels on the **3rd of October** which is being chaired by France, as they will hold the EU Presidency at the time of the COP. There will therefore be time to refine briefing between these two meeting dates.

If you have comments/queries, or would like to feed into the UK or EU meetings, please contact Andy Tully, [Andy.Tully@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Andy.Tully@defra.gsi.gov.uk) tel: +44 (0) 117 372 8570.

Thirty one draft resolutions are being tabled at CoP 10. A list of the key Draft Resolutions which may be of interest to the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies can be found in the table below. Suggested areas of input, or questions that have been raised are also listed below.

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## **Key Draft Resolutions of interest to Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies.**

[http://www.ramsar.org/cop10/cop10\\_docs\\_index\\_e.htm#dr](http://www.ramsar.org/cop10/cop10_docs_index_e.htm#dr)

### **DR1 The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2014**

Useful if OTCDs could indicate whether there are likely to be any difficulties in implementing the plan in their territories (to note that the plan is intentionally non-prescriptive so as to embrace different approaches).

### **DR8 The Ramsar CEPA programme 2009-2014**

Useful if OTCDs could indicate whether there are likely to be any difficulties in implementing the plan in their territories.

### **DR12 Partnerships with the business sector**

Does any OTCD have experience in engaging business sectors in achieving solutions to environmental problems which could feed into the DR? Would OTCDs support greater engagement between the Ramsar Secretariat and the business sector with the aim of promoting practical synergies between development and environment with a view to maintaining the ecological values of wetlands as assets for sustainable development?

### **DR13 The status of sites in the Ramsar list of wetlands**

Are OTCD aware of there obligations under Article 3.2 of the Ramsar Convention (regarding reporting of changes to ecological character of its Ramsar sites) and have mechanisms in place to deal with this? Do they intend to make use of the Montreux record?

### **DR17 Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment-technical guidance**

Useful if OTCDs could indicate whether they find this guidance, developed to assist implementation, useful or have any comments regarding the implementation of EIA and SEA in their territories.

### **DR21 Guidance on responding to the continued spread of avian influenza H5N1**

Useful if OTCDs could indicate whether they support this good practice guidance, which has been developed to assist implementation.

### **DR22 Promoting international cooperation for the conservation of waterbird flyways**

Useful if OTCDs could indicate whether they support this DR which seeks to enhance flyway partnerships and builds on synergies with CMS.

### **DR23 Wetlands and human health**

Useful if OTCDs could indicate whether they support this DR which seeks to exploit the links between healthy wetlands and healthy people and recognises the importance of the ecosystem services provided by wetlands.

### **DR24 Climate change and wetlands**

Useful if OTCDs could indicate whether they support this DR which highlights inter alia the key role of wetlands in mitigating climate change impacts through their role in carbon sequestration and flood/coastal erosion protection.

### **DR25 Wetlands and biofuels**

Useful if OTCDs could indicate whether they support this DR which seeks to avoid the negative impacts to wetlands from the promotion of bio-fuels.

### **DR26 Wetlands and extractive industries**

Useful if OTCDs could indicate whether they support this DR which emphasises the importance of SEA and EIA in relation to the extractive industries sector in order to address potential negative impacts on wetlands.

### **DR30 Small Island States and the Ramsar Convention**

Could open up another funding avenue for OTCDs in regard to supporting implementation of the Convention in their territories. Useful if OTCDs could indicate whether they support this DR which requests that the Ramsar Secretariat recognise all small islands as SIDS for the purposes of accessing funds through the Ramsar Small Grants Fund.



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## **Project 4: Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels**

*Anton Wolfaardt, Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Email: [anton.wolfaardt@jncc.gov.uk](mailto:anton.wolfaardt@jncc.gov.uk)*

In 2004 the UK, including on behalf of its South Atlantic Overseas Territories (SAOTs) – Falkland Islands, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands, British Antarctic Territory and Tristan da Cunha - ratified the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP). Of the 26 species presently covered by the Agreement, 12 occur as breeding species in the SAOTs. For most of these, the SAOTs host significant proportions of the global breeding population, three of which are endemic as breeders to the Tristan da Cunha group. Albatrosses and petrels of the South Atlantic face a range of threats both on land and at sea. Chief among these is fisheries-related mortality. In most cases, this is exacerbated by a suite of other threats, the most critical of which is the impact of introduced predators, which is especially severe at Gough Island where introduced house mice prey on chicks of the Tristan Albatross and other seabirds.

A number of initiatives have been funded and undertaken to address the range of threats at international, national and local levels. These initiatives are collaborative in nature, involving a range of Government departments both in the UK and the SAOTs, Non-Government Organisations, research institutions, industry and private landowners. As a result of constructive interaction with the fisheries industry and strong collaboration with the research and NGO community, mitigation measures to reduce seabird bycatch have been developed, tested and implemented, leading to substantially reduced levels of seabird bycatch in the fisheries of the Falkland Islands and South Georgia. Indeed, these two SAOTs are world leaders in the development and research of bycatch technology. However, in spite of these successes, the populations of most albatross and petrel populations continue to decline, indicating sustained or increased mortality in foraging areas. The vast foraging movements of these seabirds take them onto the High Seas and the national waters of other nations. This highlights the importance of engaging with other nations to promote an ecosystem approach to fisheries management, which includes minimising seabird and other bycatch.

In March 2008, Anton Wolfaardt was appointed on a three year contract to coordinate activities in the SAOTs and metropolitan UK in implementing ACAP, and will be based in the Falkland Islands for the duration of this contract. Initial work has focussed on fulfilling the ACAP reporting requirements, conducting and contributing to reviews for ACAP Working Groups, preparing for the fourth meeting of the Advisory Committee of ACAP, which takes place in Cape Town, South Africa in August, and reviewing the specific needs of SAOTs in relation to ACAP. Whilst there are differences between the SAOTs in terms of albatross and petrel conservation, there are also many similarities, and the cross-cutting nature of this project has already led to coordination efficiencies and opportunities for sharing lessons and experience. The ultimate objective of ACAP is to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for albatrosses and petrels, and this project is being implemented to ensure that the UK and the SAOTs help meet this objective.

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## Project 5: Sustainable Development

### Climate Change

*Deborah Procter, Climate Changer Adviser, Joint Nature Conservation Committee.*

Email: [deborah.procter@jncc.gov.uk](mailto:deborah.procter@jncc.gov.uk)

JNCC provides policy advice to government and other bodies on the interrelationships between climate change and biodiversity; including the impacts of climate change on biodiversity, adaptation principles and mechanisms, and the role of biodiversity in mitigating climate change in the UK and internationally.

In July this year JNCC produced a series of leaflets explaining what climate change is and how it impacts the UKOTs. Hopefully you have seen copies by now, if not please have a look at our web site [www.jncc.gov.uk/page-4362](http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-4362). or ask for copies to be sent. We are keen to find out what you think of these so please do let us know.

We have more work planned to get climate change issues firmly on the agenda of all those with a role to play in understanding what is changing, where the change is happening and, importantly, what approaches can be taken to cope with climate change. We aim to build on existing networks and would welcome ideas from others already working in this field.

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### Economic valuation

*Deanna Donovan, Environmental Economics Adviser, Joint Nature Conservation Committee*

Email: [deanna.donovan@jncc.gov.uk](mailto:deanna.donovan@jncc.gov.uk)

We are pleased to report that since the beginning of June, Deanna Donovan has joined JNCC's Sustainability Advice Team as the Environmental Economics Adviser, replacing Emily McKenzie who has moved on to the USA. Picking up the economic valuation work begun by Emily, Deanna joined Tara and colleagues from the French development assistance agency (AFD) in organising a workshop entitled "Economic assessment of ecosystem biodiversity and services; what role does it play in development strategies? Past experience and future perspectives" at the Réunion conference

Following a brief introduction to the concepts of economic valuation by chairman, Nicholas Conner, Principal Economist, Department of Environment and Climate Change, New South Wales (Australia) followed by an overview of the importance of valuing biodiversity in development planning by Jean-Yves Grosclaude, Head of Rural Development, Environment and Natural Resources, AFD, Deanna gave a brief synopsis of the JNCC economics valuation toolkit and its application.

The main focus of the workshop was the presentation of the Montserrat Case Study by Stephen Mendes, Education Officer, Ministry of Agriculture, Land, Housing and the Environment, Montserrat. Beginning his talk with a short DVD introducing the study area and the stakeholders, Stephen went on to discuss the results of the valuation exercise and its subsequent use. Brief presentations were also made by Samia Sarkis, Department of Conservation Services, Bermuda, regarding their on-going economic valuation of coral reefs and by Matt Cottam, Senior Research Officer, Cayman Islands, regarding a valuation exercise on the Central Mangrove wetland. All reported a positive experience

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with economic valuation, which they felt provided both a effective product and proved a very useful learning experience for all involved. Recommendations from the workshop highlighted the desire for greater use of economic valuation of biodiversity as a decision-making tool and the need for pragmatic and practical approaches appropriate to OT conditions, better communications, increased data availability and access, more training and improved coordination with partners and funding agents. For full details of the recommendations of this and other Workshops as well as the conference as a whole, please refer to <http://reunion2008eu.blogspot.com/2008/07/message-from-reunion-island.html>.

JNCC felt that the Workshop presentations plus the subsequent question and answer period proved most useful in identifying some of the strengths and weaknesses of using this economic valuation as well as ways in which we could move forward. We look forward to exploring several suggestions made regarding ways in which together we might refine the techniques and hone the professional skills critical to making economic valuation an even more useful, and more utilised, tool in development planning. Should you have any comments or questions in this regard, we would be most pleased to hear from you. Please do not hesitate to contact Deanna Donovan.

#### List of events in the next six months.

*If you have events that you would like to highlight in the next newsletter (coming out in December) please get in touch with Tara.*

*(nb Ramsar events highlighted in yellow)*

Date	Event	Weblink	Location
15 <sup>th</sup> Aug	Darwin deadline	<a href="http://darwin.defra.gov.uk">http://darwin.defra.gov.uk</a> Deadline for applications for Darwin main projects and post projects	n/a
26 <sup>th</sup> Aug	Feedback on Ramsar due to Defra	<a href="http://www.ramsar.org/cop10/cop10_docs_index_e.htm#d_r">http://www.ramsar.org/cop10/cop10_docs_index_e.htm#d_r</a> Comments to be sent to andy.tully@defra.gsi.gov.uk	n/a
3 <sup>rd</sup> Sept	UK ramsar meeting	To clarify UK position	London
3 <sup>rd</sup> October	EU ramsar meeting	To agree EU position	Brussels.
28 <sup>th</sup> Oct to 4 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2008	Ramsar Conference of the Parties 10	<a href="http://ramsar.org/meetings.htm">http://ramsar.org/meetings.htm</a>	Changwon, Republic of Korea
5 <sup>th</sup> – 14 <sup>th</sup> October	IUCN World Congress	<a href="http://cms.iucn.org/news_events/events/congress/index.cfm">http://cms.iucn.org/news_events/events/congress/index.cfm</a> (divided into journeys and one of the journeys is islands)	Barcelona, Spain
17 <sup>th</sup> October	EC Green paper on EU OCT relations	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/development/how/consultation/index.cfm?action=vie...">http://ec.europa.eu/development/how/consultation/index.cfm?action=vie...</a> Closing date for consultation	n/a
30 <sup>th</sup> Nov – 5 <sup>th</sup> Dec.	Convention on Migratory Species CoP 9	<a href="http://www.cms.int/bodies/COP/cop9/cop9_meeting_docs.htm">http://www.cms.int/bodies/COP/cop9/cop9_meeting_docs.htm</a>	Rome, Italy

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## Other News

- The foreign affairs Committee review of the Overseas Territories is now available on line <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmfaaff/147/14702.htm>
- A postgraduate studentship for research on Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) measurements from U.K. islands in the South Atlantic Ocean at the University of East Anglia is being advertised <http://biobis.bio.uea.ac.uk/Resproject/show.aspx?ID=190>
- Defra is now inviting applications from UK institutions for support for main projects and Post Projects to commence from April 2009. New guidance notes and application forms are available on the Darwin website at <http://darwin.defra.gov.uk>. (**closing date 15<sup>th</sup> August**)
- The European Commission has opened a consultation on the Green Paper on the future relations between the EU and the OCTs. (**Deadline 17 October 2008**) Check the website below: <http://ec.europa.eu/development/how/consultation/index.cfm?action=vie...>
- The EC consultation on a discussion paper on Developing an EU Framework for Invasive Alien Species closed in May. Results of the consultation are now available online: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/invasivealien/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/invasivealien/index_en.htm)

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## Featured Photo

*If you have a photo that you would like featured here, please send one in for the next edition.*



*UKOT and UK participants in at the Reunion Conference © Lynda Varlack*

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